



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



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For Immediate Release

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Wetland Restoration Continues at Huntley Meadows

The official groundbreaking took place this past spring but work is ramping up at Huntley Meadows Park as efforts to save the wetland take on more complexity. Construction of a berm in the wetlands in Alexandria, Va., is expected to begin in late July or early August. The earthen and vinyl sheet piling berm will allow park staff to raise the water levels in the wetland approximately two feet. That will reclaim water depth that has been lost to silt draining into the wetland from erosion and construction associated with upstream suburban development.

The berm is part of a restoration of the central wetland in the park. The restoration has brought construction equipment into the wetland, and that equipment will be visible in the park's natural areas for a few more months. However, the reconstruction means the park will continue to have a functioning, healthy and diverse wetland capable of supporting locally rare plants and animals on a long-term basis.

The berm will work hand-in-hand with a water control structure comprised of pipes and slide gates that staff can use to adjust water levels seasonally. Through those fluctuating water levels, staff will be able to maintain a healthy wetland for decades and return biodiversity to Huntley Meadow's wetlands.

The Fairfax County Park Authority scheduled this part of the project for mid-summer to minimize disturbance of animals during their reproductive seasons. Staff and volunteers have removed hundreds of reptiles, amphibians and native plants from areas where digging will take place, relocating them to other spots in the park.

The Park Authority expects the water control structure to be completed by September. The project as a whole should be completed by November or December. Some cleanup tasks may last until March.

There will be temporary trail closures in parts of the park until the project's completion. The boardwalk and the observation tower are open, but the hike-bike trail off the South Kings Highway entrance is closed.

View videos about the project here,

<http://ourstoriesandperspectives.com/2013/03/20/construction-begins-on-the-huntley-meadows-wetlands-restoration-project/>.

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